Climatological Observers

NEWSLETTER

Observations Provision Branch

CLIMATOLOGICAL OBSERVERS NEWSLETTER - JANUARY 1996

Dear Observer

Trading Fund fast approaches and, as I indicated in last September's supplementary Newsletter, changes are taking place within the Met. Office. I promised to keep you informed of further changes and this Newsletter will hopefully bring you up to date with what is happening.

As in previous years we had hoped to issue a full Newsletter during the winter; however, the combination of staff cuts and changes has left insufficient time to accomplish this. More on staff changes later but in the meantime I would like to thank everyone who contributed articles for publication; they will be kept for use in a future issue of the Newsletter. Please continue to send us articles as the more we have on tap the more likely it is that a full Newsletter will be published next year. High Standard and Long Service Awards will continue, and with respect to the former non receipt does not mean your station provides poor quality data. We try to reward every good station eventually but priority is given to stations who have not previously won an award. Long Service Awards are made for 10 years and over, 20 years and over, and 30 years and over. We are continually updating our records and if you feel you have been missed please do not hesitate to contact us and put the record straight.

UPDATE SINCE LAST NEWSLETTER

Christmas has come and gone and the first thing I want to do is apologise for the fact that you did not receive a 1996 Calendar or Wall Planner this year. Financial cut backs and a Senior Management decision to save money were the reasons given. I have had several comments from you and we realise that the decision has been the cause of considerable disappointment. Rest assured your comments have been passed on and hopefully next year the issue of Calendars/Wall Planners will be restored.

As is often the case when there is a reorganisation, names change and the Met. Office is no different. The Observations Division has been restructured and, with effect from 18th December last, we come under a different section, namely **OBSERVATIONS LAND**. Our new address is:

The Met. Office
Observations Land - (OL)6 (Climate)
Room 105, London Road
Bracknell
Berks. RG12 2SZ

The Quality Control section, where your Metform 3208B is sent, has also changed and they are now part of **OBSERVATIONS PLANS & REQUIREMENTS**. Their address is:

The Met. Office
Observations Plans & Requirements (OPR3a)
Room 137, London Road
Bracknell
Berks. RG12 2SZ

THE FUTURE

CHANGES AT BRACKNELL

As well as a change of name, we are having changes in staff numbers and names. **Michael Weston**, whom some of you met or at least had contact with, has retired and **Phil Wills** has been promoted to take over as **Co-ordinator Surface Networks**. Phil is well known to many of you and will, among his other duties, still be keeping a weather eye on what is happening in the Climatological Network.

With the advent of Trading Fund, staff savings are being made in the Met. Office and Observations Land has not escaped the 'axe'. The number of Surface Network Managers/Inspectors is being reduced from nine to seven with effect from 31 March 1996. The end result is that **John Higgins** (Auxiliary Network) and myself (**George Spence**) have been granted early retirement and leave at the end of March.

As a result of the above, a few staff changes are necessary in the Climate section. Phil has already been replaced by **Ian Brownston** who joined us on 8 January 1996. Ian's most recent experience is in Defence Services Administration but he has had many years of observational experience in the UK and Overseas. Some of you may have met, or spoken to, him when he was at Leeds Weather Centre a few years ago. It has been decided that Shirley's post is to be filled but not until the beginning of April 1996. The new post-holder will be **John Pawley** who is currently Officer-in-Charge at Dunkeswell. The station closes on 31 March 1996 and John, who will start on 1 April 1996, comes to us with a wealth of observational experience gained from postings in the UK and Overseas. John has carried out Climatological and Auxiliary inspections in the South West and I am sure he will quickly slot in to the post. In summary the Climate section has been reduced to two with Ian and I in post at the moment and John joining the team when I go at the end of March. Contact telephone numbers at Bracknell are as follows:

Ian Brownston	**01344 854667**
George Spence	**01344 854456** (Until 29 March 1996)
John Pawley	**01344 854456** (W.E.F. 1 April 1996)

An answerphone system is in place when no one is available or when our lines are busy, and a message can be left if necessary.

INSPECTIONS 1996

The combined Climatological and Auxiliary Stations inspection visits last year proved to be a successful venture. The scheme for 1996 is going to be extended to include **SAMOS** (**S**emi **A**utomated **M**eteorological **O**bserving **S**ystem) and **AWS** (**A**utomatic **W**eather **S**tations) Network Managers. If you are due to be inspected this year you could be visited by any one of the following five inspectors: **Ian Brownston** (Climate), **John Pawley** (Climate), **Steve Haynes** (SAMOS and Auxiliary), **Andy Moffat** (Auxiliary) or **Peter Godwin** (AWS).

They will all be located in Room 105 at Bracknell and will be joined by **Dave Croxall** who will provide administration support.

TRAINING

Two courses have been held at the Met. Office College so far this academic year. Twenty-five students have attended and I am pleased to say that COC3 at the end of February is fully subscribed. However, there are still places available on COC4 (26 - 29 March 1996) and COC5 (21 - 24 May 1996). The courses must have a reasonable number of students, otherwise they may be cancelled. If that happens it is unlikely that we will be offered as many courses in future years. If you are interested **please** contact Ian or myself as soon possible to secure a place.

We are hoping to have four courses at the College and one for placement students at Preston Montford Field Centre in the next academic year. When the College calendar is published we will send out training details for 1996/97.

METFORMS

During the years I have been in this post we seem to have had an annual problem with the distribution of metforms and stationery from, firstly Woolwich and latterly Llangennech. Despite heroic efforts by Shirley to keep everyone up to date with the opening and closing of stations and changes in requirements, the distribution never went out without some sort of hiccup. As from February this year the Met. Office is going to take on the responsibility of issuing its own forms. Discussions are taking place between us and the section responsible to determine the best way forward, but hopefully the next annual issue will run smoother than in previous years.

METFORM 3208B

A program has been devised whereby you can send your data to us on disk instead of filling in a Metform 3208B. The program is being trialled at the moment and will hopefully become available in the not too distant future. It is designed to run on any IBM compatible computer with the Microsoft Windows application. Once the trial has been successfully completed, start-up packages will be available from us. If any of you are interested in this method of sending data please let us know.

PERSONAL REFLECTIONS

I have thoroughly enjoyed the time I have spent in Climatological Station Management. I have been paid to travel the length and breadth of England and Wales (unfortunately not Scotland) and visited many places I might not have seen otherwise. It has been my privilege to meet many of you and I have been impressed by the level of enthusiasm shown throughout the network. I hope to speak to many of you before I retire at the end of March, but I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of you for the co-operation, hospitality and friendship given to me during the last six years. I am sure Ian and John will continue to look after the Climatological Network to the best of their abilities and that you will give them the support you gave me.

Please accept my best wishes for the future.

George Spence

George Spence